

REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF MANAGERS
OF THE
FREE PRODUCE ASSOCIATION
OF FRIENDS, OF
NEW-YORK YEARLY MEETING.

1852.

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REPORT, &c.

THE managers of the Free Produce Association, in a retrospect of the past year, feel that however small the results of their action may appear, and however slight the visible growth of the principles of the Association, that the duty of individual faithfulness is in nowise lessened ; and that however many, of whom better things might be expected, may fail to uphold a consistent testimony against the root and offspring of Slavery—the refusal to partake of the fruits of unrequited toil—such remissness can be no excuse for others ; for “To him that knoweth to do good and doeth not, to him it is sin.”

In order to circulate correct information and

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revive an interest, a committee was appointed to prepare tracts on the subject. One, entitled "Slavery and the Slave Trade—Who is Responsible ?" was issued last winter, the free circulation of which has, it is hoped, been doing a silent work of good.

This would have been followed by others, had not the attention of the managers been imperatively called in another direction. In our last report, we alluded to the small patronage which the Free Produce Store in this city was receiving, and the necessity of a more active and efficient support, to ensure its continuance. This has not been realized. Our friend, R. L. Murray, in second month last, informed us that that patronage had not extended, and that the business of the past year had not only yielded no remuneration for his own time, but had not even been sufficient to meet the expenses of the store, and

that he would therefore be compelled to relinquish it. He informed the meeting however, that his foreman was desirous of conducting a general grocery business, for which purpose he had friends who would employ him, and supply him with some capital, being himself without means; and that he would connect the Free Produce business with it, if the managers would furnish two thousand dollars, on interest, as assistance in carrying on that branch.

Being a man of good qualifications, worthy of entire confidence and well-fitted for the work, acquainted also with the sources of supply which were open to R. L. Murray, the managers felt satisfied that this was the best arrangement they could make in order to secure a supply of Free Labor goods; the experience of R. L. Murray, having demonstrated that a store for the exclusive sale of these goods on a liberal scale, having

a full assortment at low prices, cannot for the present be maintained here.

Deeply regretting the necessity for this change in the manner of conducting the business, the managers appointed a committee who have raised the requisite amount, and have concluded the arrangement with the individual alluded to. The managers are glad therefore to be able to report that a large assortment of Free Labor articles, both dry goods and groceries, may still be obtained at the former place, No. 86 Pearl Street, of E. Towne, Agent. It is due to E. Towne, also to add, that the greater portion of his time will necessarily be devoted to this branch of his business, and much more invested in it, than the amount furnished him by the managers. We hope, therefore, he will be liberally sustained by all the friends of the cause. The store will be well supplied, as heretofore, with a choice selection

of teas, coffee and other articles which have no connection with slave labor.

The lively interest in this cause which has been felt by our friends in England, appears to spread. The free cotton of our southern States is still very much wanted by them. It is accessible to us, and in increased quantities ; and they are still looking to us for it. Shall they in vain look to us for assistance in this matter ? Shall we, without an effort, allow the free cotton of small proprietors to be mixed up and lost amongst the vast produce of Slave labor ; or shall we not rather lend our aid to select and keep distinct this produce of free labor, and hold it up before the world, and honor it by the marked preference of freemen ? By so doing, we should be carrying out our own principles, and at the same time be giving that substantial encouragement to the productions of free labor which would both insure

an increase, and be a solace to the friends of freedom in the regions of Slavery.

At one time in the history of this country Slavery was unprofitable, because there was comparatively little demand for the produce of Slave labor; and many, even in the southern States, were looking to its early abolition. But subsequent facilities in the preparation of cotton, materially lessened its cost, and it soon became the cheapest article that could be had for human clothing. Hence, a great demand has sprung up for it. Its cultivation immediately became profitable, and it opened a vast and unexpected field for the employment of Slaves. A change has consequently come over the people of the slaveholding States, in relation to Slavery; now they cling to that which once they deplored; and the maintenance of every branch of this system—hateful as it is, and so steeped in ignorance, de-

gradation and cruelty—appears to be regarded by them as of even greater importance than the union of our common country. Like the noisy worshippers of the silver shrine, who cried out, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians,” politicians of the present day, and others, “who by this craft gain their wealth,” shout, with pretended patriotic zeal, “Union ! Union !—Slavery ! Slavery !” as though Slavery were Union, and Union Slavery !

What has produced this wonderful change ? What but the demand for *the labor* of slaves, and the self-interest and covetousness growing out of the vast traffic therein ?

Surely there can be no doubt that a general rejection of the produce of Slavery, so as to make “the craft” unprofitable, would soon open the eyes of its worshippers, and even of slave-

holders, to its iniquity ; and instead of the present disgraceful outcry in favor of slavery, he would be regarded as the wisest and greatest patriot who should be able to suggest the best and most practical means for its extinction.

It appears to us, therefore, very important that every bale of free cotton which can be obtained, should find a ready market, in preference to that which is the product of Slavery. Were this the case, the quantity would, doubtless, rapidly increase, until whole Counties, perhaps even States, would be gradually transferred from the grasp of Slavery to that of freedom. And did that love to God and to our brother, which our holy religion enjoins, have full and free course in our hearts, this, it is believed, would be realized. But how many of us, "while hugging our own rich blessings to our bosoms, forget those who

have no such blessings, but are compelled to embrace misery and hopeless wretchedness."

Towards those who differ from us in sentiment, we wish to exercise that charity which "suffereth long and is kind;" and in conclusion, we have only to desire that such may examine the subject in the light of truth, in which case we believe they would find a work to do, in clearing their own hands from this enormous evil. "Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

New-York, 5th month 24th, 1852.

Signed, by direction and on behalf

of the Board of Managers,

ISAAC H. ALLEN,

Secretary.

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